

What is Claimed Is:

1. An airbag comprising:
an internal space that is inflated upon airbag deployment;
at least one material panel that is formed into an elongate configuration extending about at least a portion of the internal space; and
at least one panel portion of the one material panel that extends in the longitudinal direction in the internal space and acts to tether the airbag for limiting inflation thereof in a direction transverse to the longitudinal direction.
2. The airbag of claim 1 wherein the one panel portion divides the airbag internal space into at least two isolated chambers, and the one panel portion includes at least one vent hole to provide airflow between the chambers for substantially uniform airbag inflation.
3. The airbag of claim 1 wherein the at least one material panel comprises a pair of material panels that extend in the longitudinal direction and cooperate to form the internal space, and the at least one panel portion divides the airbag into at least two chambers.
4. The airbag of claim 3 wherein the at least one material panel portion comprises a pair of material panel portions of the corresponding pair of material panels with the pair of material panel portions overlying each other to extend in the longitudinal direction so that a double material layer divides the two chambers from each other.
5. The airbag of claim 4 wherein the pair of material panel portions divide the airbag internal space into at least two isolated chambers, and each include at least one vent hole positioned to be in alignment with the panel portions overlying each other to provide airflow between the chambers for substantially uniform airbag inflation.
6. The airbag of claim 3 wherein the one material panel is longer than the other material panel of the pair of material panels in a widthwise direction transverse to the longitudinal direction due to the one panel portion thereof so that only a single material layer divides the two chambers from each other.

7. The airbag of claim 6 wherein one of the two chambers is further divided into multiple chambers, and
at least one separate panel extending in the longitudinal direction in the internal space to form the multiple chambers in the one chamber.
8. The airbag of claim 1 wherein the at least one material panel comprises a single material panel, and the at least one panel portion comprises a double material layer formed from the single material panel.
9. The airbag of claim 8 wherein the double material layer panel portion divides the internal space into two chambers, and includes a vent hole through the double material layer to provide airflow between the chambers for substantially uniform airbag inflation.
10. The airbag of claim 1 wherein the at least one material panel comprise multiple material panels, and the at least one panel portion comprises a pair of panel portions that divide the internal space into multiple chambers.
11. The airbag of claim 1 including a gas generator for inflating the airbag internal space for airbag deployment.
12. An airbag comprising:
an internal space that is inflated upon airbag deployment;
at least one material panel extending at least partially about the internal space;
at least one tether panel that divides the internal space into at least two chambers; and
at least one vent hole in the tether panel to allow the two chambers to be in communication for substantially uniform airbag inflation.
13. The airbag of claim 12 wherein the one material panel and one tether panel are of a single material piece.
14. The airbag of claim 12 wherein the one material panel is folded to form the two chambers.

15. The airbag of claim 14 wherein the one tether panel is integral with the one material panel and comprises a double material layer through which the vent hole is formed.

16. The airbag of claim 12 wherein the at least one material panel comprises a pair of material panels that are folded to form the two chambers.

17. The airbag of claim 16 wherein the one tether panel is integral with one of the pair of material panels so that the one tether panel comprises a single material layer.

18. The airbag of claim 16 wherein the at least one tether panel comprises two tether panels each integral with one of the pair of material panels so that there is a double material layer through which the vent hole is formed.

19. The airbag of claim 17 including an additional pair of material panels that are folded to form an additional two chambers, and an additional tether panel that is integral with one of the additional pair of material panels extending between the additional two chambers, and one of the pair of material panels and one of the additional pair of panels being attached to provide the airbag internal space with four chambers with at least one vent hole formed through the attached material panels from the material panel pair and additional pair.

20. The airbag of claim 17 including at least two additional tether panels separate from the material panels and disposed in the airbag internal space and each including at least one vent hole to form four chambers in the internal space.

21. A method of forming an airbag, the method comprising:
folding at least one material panel to extend about at least a portion of an airbag internal space to be inflated with the folded material panel having an elongate configuration extending in a longitudinal direction;
tethering the airbag with a portion of the one material panel extending in the longitudinal direction in the airbag internal space to limit inflation thereof in a direction transverse to the longitudinal direction;

dividing the airbag internal space into at least two chambers with the longitudinally extending portion of the one material panel in the airbag internal space; and

providing a through opening in the material panel portion to vent inflation gas therethrough for substantially uniform airbag inflation.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein the folding at least one material panel comprises folding a pair of material panels about the airbag internal space, and the tethering the airbag comprises tethering the airbag with a portion of one of the pair of material panels or portions of both of the pair of material panels.

23. The method of claim 21 wherein the folding at least one material panel comprises folding a single material panel, and the airbag is tethered by folding the portion of the single material panel to provide a double material layer extending longitudinally in the airbag internal space.

24. The method of claim 22 wherein the folding a pair of material panels comprising folding two pair of material panels, the tethering the airbag comprises tethering the airbag with a portion of one of the material panels from each panel pair, and

attaching the two pair of material panels along one material panel of each pair, and the dividing the airbag internal space comprises dividing the airbag internal space into four chambers via the material panel portions and the attached material panels.

25. The method of claim 21 wherein the tethering the airbag comprises tethering the airbag with two separate tether panels, and the dividing the airbag internal space comprises dividing the airbag internal space into four chambers via the material panel portion and the two separate tether panels extending longitudinally in the airbag internal space.